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# Patty Berg



[www.assembly.ca.gov/berg](http://www.assembly.ca.gov/berg)

## Dear Friends,

It's been an eventful two years since you first selected me as your representative in Sacramento, an honor which I have never taken lightly and for which I am constantly grateful.

I've tried always to be responsive to your calls, letters and e-mails. You frankly would be amazed at the volume of mail I receive, and the stacks of letters I send out in response.

Now, in addition to those efforts, I want to reach out on a regular basis with this electronic newsletter.

I'm going to kick it off this month with a brief summary of some of the bills I've authored during the two-year session that ended in August.

I hope that, though we may not agree on everything, you'll approve of my efforts and that you'll see this list as a thank-you note for the great honor you have given me.

I believe we are partners, you and I, and that when California achieves great things it is thanks in large part to people like you. It is active and concerned residents just like you that provide the push for reform, the energy for change, and the steadfastness to do what's right.

If there's any way you think we can be of help to you, please don't hesitate to contact my staff in my district office that is nearest you.

I feel especially fortunate to represent the [1<sup>st</sup> Assembly District](#). Not only is it one of the biggest of all 80 Assembly districts in terms of geography, but it also is populated by some of the most active, most aware, and most entrepreneurial people in the state.

Thanks again for this chance to serve you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patty Berg".

Assemblywoman, 1<sup>st</sup> District

**Eureka District  
Office**

(707) 445-7014  
fax 445-6607  
235 4<sup>th</sup> St., Suite C  
Eureka, CA  
95501

**Santa Rosa District  
Office**

(707) 576-2526  
fax 576-2297  
50 D St., Suite 450  
Santa Rosa, CA  
95404

**Ukiah District Office**

(707) 463-5770  
fax 463-4773  
104 W. Church St.  
Ukiah, CA  
95482

**Capitol Office**

(916) 319-2001  
fax 319-2101  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA  
94249-0001

## When You've Got Your Health ...

It's hard to imagine anything that more directly affects us than our health and the health of our loved ones. During the past two years, I've used the authority you have entrusted in me to advance the cause of health for all Californians. There remains plenty of work to be done, of course, but I think we're off to a good start.

Here are some of the laws I've written. Just click on the blue text for more information on any bill in this newsletter.

[AB 1166 End-of-Life Care](#). This law will ensure that an individual's wishes at the end of life are honored while they are receiving care from a hospice care professional.

[AB 1201 Sub-Acute Care](#). This law will protect children and seniors who require mechanical ventilation and tracheotomy care. In the event of a hospital closure, this law allows the patient to stay in a sub-acute unit until they find a proper transfer, and avoids having patients frantically transferred to locations that are often far away from loved ones.

[AB 1220 Stroke and Heart Disease Master Plan](#). This law establishes the Stroke and Heart Disease Task Force within the Department of Health Services to create a Stroke and Heart Disease Prevention Master Plan in California. The Master Plan will make California eligible for \$1 million per year in federal funds.

*There are about 3.2 million Californians older than 65. By the year 2020, that number is expected to double. Before mid-century, nearly one in five of us will be older than 85.*

## Continuing the Fight Against AIDS and Hepatitis C

For two years, and under two governors, I've succeeded in lining up support for bills to encourage the expansion of needle-exchange programs to combat AIDS and Hepatitis-C.

It seems that both governors missed the point. Clean needles don't encourage drug use, but they prevent the spread of disease and encourage addicts to seek treatment.

For just 15 cents, a county health department can prevent a disease that otherwise might cost taxpayers \$25,000 a year to treat.

Last year, I sought to overturn the inane requirement that cities and

counties declare a health emergency every two weeks in order to continue operating their already legal needle-exchange programs. [AB 946 Syringe Exchange Program](#) passed the Legislature, but was vetoed by Gov. Gray Davis.

This year, I came back to the table, and again won the support needed to pass [AB 2871 Needle Exchange Programs](#). This life-saving bill was vetoed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. In his veto message, the governor said he would be willing to reconsider the measure in the future, and I intend to give him the chance next year.

## Boomers Are Coming: People Get Ready

The second report of the Master Plan on Aging will soon be available on my Website.

As you may already know, I've called together a range of national experts to begin the crucial task of developing a better system to serve of an ever-increasing population of older adults.

The second report, "Restructuring the California Department of Aging and

Long-Term Care Services in California," which offers a blueprint for restructuring the state's many aging-related programs, follows the widely circulated report "Preparing for the Aging Baby Boomers," released in May.

A third report, expected in the coming weeks, lays out a legislative platform and strategies to help us make the reforms called for in the earlier reports.

## Protecting The Planet We Live On

As an organic master gardener, I take my responsibility to care for my land, my gardens and my plants very seriously. I know that the decisions I make have the potential to affect life in ways both large and small.

As a member of the state Assembly, I take very seriously my responsibility to protect and preserve the world around us, so that future generations can enjoy the beauty that we ourselves have inherited.

Here, too, I know that the decisions we make will have effects that outlive us.

So I have written several bills over the past couple years that I believe help protect and manage California's natural birthright.

All of these bills were signed into law.

**[AB 1168 Wild and Scenic Rivers](#)** protects the lower Albion and Gualala rivers from new diversions intended to export water out of the region. This law nurtures both wildlife and the local economy.

**[AB 1296 Krill](#)** This law prohibits the taking of krill for any purpose other than

scientific research. Krill is one of the major components of the food chain, and without it, sea birds, fish and marine mammals would be unable to survive. This bill is quite timely, as the business of feeding krill to farm-raised salmon is becoming common in fishing world.

**[AB 1354 Buyback Program](#)** Allows California fishermen to participate in any federally established buy-back program for the Pacific ground fish fishery.

**[AB 2760 Department of Fish and Game Clean-up](#)**. This law prevents the taking of undersized halibut, eliminates a loophole allowing certain dive boats to fish without a license, and reestablishes commercial hook-and-line fishing gear restrictions.

**[AB 2519 Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture SALMON/ROE bill](#)**. This law will enhance efforts to protect and restore salmon stocks and the commercial roe herring fishery. In addition, this law makes sure the Fish and Game Commission has the money it needs to manage the herring fishery.

*In 1851 the State of California enacted its first law specifically governing fish and game matters. It dealt with planting and taking oysters.*

## Keeping the Focus on Rural Communities

Our beautiful North State district is home to some of California's most remote and rural communities. I'm very determined to be a strong voice in Sacramento for these residents.

**[AB 2758 Telecommunication Funding](#)**. This law gives rural communities two more years to claim their share of the Public Utilities Commission's Rural Telecommunications Infrastructure grants. This program, funded by existing taxes, helps bring phone service to some of California's most remote homes, including many along the north coast.

**[AB 1199 Trinity Hospital](#)** – This law seeks to save the only hospital in Trinity County. It lets the financially sound local utility take charge of the debt-riddled Trinity Hospital for three years. It's no guarantee the hospital will be saved, but without it, failure next month was certain.

**[AB 2706 Education Technology Funding](#)**. This bill ensures that even the state's smallest school districts have a fair chance at receiving federal grant money to give all children better access to technology in the classroom. It will nearly triple the amount of federal funds going to small Northern California school districts in coming years.

*California's rural counties account for 46 percent of the state's total landmass, but are home to only 7 percent of its population. About 2.4 million Californians live in rural areas.*

## Fighting Elder Abuse

Protecting and respecting our senior citizens should be a top priority for all of us.

That's why my committee on Aging and Long-Term Care wrote **[AB 3095](#)** to encourage judges to force convicted elder abusers into counseling programs similar to the anger management programs that spousal abusers must attend.

## Decisions Week and Alzheimer's Awareness Month

I cannot express in strong enough terms exactly how important I think it is to plan ahead for the end of life. Toward that goal, I co-authored a resolution that declares November 7 through 13 as "Healthcare Decisions Week."

I want to encourage all adult Californians to complete an advance healthcare directive, outlining the kind of medical care they want at the end of their lives.

In a recent survey, 9 out of 10 people said they would prefer to be cared for at home if they were terminally ill. Yet, more than half of Americans die in institutions

and less than 25 percent of people have completed a document expressing their preferences for end-of-life care.

November also is Alzheimer's Awareness Month. The disease affects about 5 million American adults.

It generally develops gradually and eventually leaves its victims totally unable to care for themselves.

About 10 percent of the population over 65 years old is afflicted with what is probably Alzheimer's Disease. The percentage rises to just under 50 percent for those who are over 85, the fastest growing age group in America.

## Fort Bragg Native Wins Prestigious NCAA Woman of the Year Award

Talk about a local hero! Ft. Bragg's own Kelly Albin, an All-American lacrosse player at UC Davis, was recently named the NCAA Woman of the Year, one of the most prestigious awards in all of college sports.

The NCAA Woman of the Year award recognizes women in intercollegiate athletics for their outstanding achievements in athletics, academics and community service.

"I'm very flattered and honored to be chosen among such an amazing group of people with such long lists of accomplishments," she said.

Albin graduated magna cum laude from UC Davis in March, earning her degree in food science. She was a top graduating senior, finishing with a 3.95 composite grade-point average. She recently began her work toward a master's degree.

## Coffee Break

### Lawmaker Lingo

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BUDGET  
CAUCUS  
COMMITTEE  
DEMOCRAT  
GOVERNOR  
LAW  
REPUBLICAN  
SCHWARZENEGGER  
SENATE  
VETO  
VOTE

Words can be written diagonally, bottom to top or backwards.

*If you need some last-minute advice when cooking your holiday meal, the USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline will be open from 5 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day. Call 800 535-4555. Information is available in English and Spanish.*